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Senate

The Senate met at 2 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. LEAHY).

PRAYER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Today's opening prayer will be offered by Pastor Dave Weigley, President of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in the Mid-Atlantic States.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Almighty God, creator and maker of all, who sits enthroned above the earth, and in whom we live, move and have our being, we praise You from whom all blessings flow. We thank You for Your sustaining power, for peace, for the freedoms we enjoy. We ask Your blessings on our great Nation, insightful leaders and dedicated lawmakers.

Establish their steps and give them discernment and courage to act justly, love mercy and walk humbly. Strengthen those who need to be uplifted, who are downcast, who need the compassionate touch of a brother's or sister's hand. Above all, may Your kingdom come, may Your will be done, and may we readily incline our ears to Your call today. This we pray in Your holy and righteous Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT ACT OF 2014—MOTION TO PROCEED—Resumed

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I move to proceed to Calendar No. 309, S. 1086.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. BALDWIN.) The clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read as follows: A bill (S. 1086) to reauthorize and improve the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, and for other purposes.

SCHEDULE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, following my remarks and those of the Republican leader, the Senate will be in a period of morning business with Senators permitted to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

There will be no rollcall votes today because of the inclement weather we have had the last 3 or 4 days. The next rollcall vote will be tomorrow at 11:45 a.m.

BENEFITTING THE WEALTHY

Charles and David Koch are shrewd businessmen. Their wealth is nearly unparalleled, not only in America but in the world. The brothers inherited a small oil company. They inherited this company from their dad. They built it into a multinational corporation. It refines oil, makes carpets, manufactures fertilizers and chemicals, makes paper products, extracts minerals, produces glass, owns a cattle ranch, and lots of stuff.

Like most shrewd businessmen, the oil baron Koch brothers are very good at protecting and growing their prodigious future and their prodigious fortune. There is nothing un-American about that. But what is un-American is when shadowy billionaires pour unlimited money into our democracy to rig the system, to benefit themselves and the wealthiest 1 percent.

I believe in an America where economic opportunity is open to all. Based on their actions and policies they promote, the Koch brothers seem to believe in an America where the system is rigged to benefit the very wealthy.

Based on Senate Republicans' ardent defense of the Koch brothers and the fact that they advocate for many of the same policies as the Koch brothers, it seems my Republican colleagues also believe in a system that benefits billionaires at the expense of the middle class.

The Koch brothers are willing to invest billions to buy that America. They are investing billions to buy that America. In 2010 the Supreme Court opened the flood gates of corporate money into electoral politics. That was with the Citizens United decision. Since mega donors such as Charles and David Koch can launder their huge contributions using shadowy shell groups and so-called nonprofits, it is difficult to tell exactly how much they have invested so far.

Investigative reporting done by some of the most respected news outlets in the country has revealed that the Koch brothers funnel money through a web of investor groups and advocacy organizations that are immune from disclosure rules, such as the Club for Growth, Heritage Action, the NRA, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. We may never know how much money the Koch brothers are spending to rig the system, to rig the system for themselves.

But we do know their investments have paid off already. In November 2010, the petroleum industry walked right through the door the Supreme Court had opened and spent hundreds of millions of dollars to elect a Republican majority to the House of Representatives. That Republican majority has effectively shut down any hope of passing legislation to limit the pollution that has caused climate change.

That Republican majority is, in fact, working to gut the most important safeguards to keep cancer-causing toxins and pollution that cause sickness and death out of the air we breathe and the water we drink. Without those safeguards, the Koch brothers would pass on the higher health care costs to

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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